

Washington, D.C. – Congressmen Charlie Wilson (OH-6) today announced his support of new legislation that could dramatically increase the amount of oil produced in the U.S. [Big oil companies are not using 68 million acres of drillable land that the federal government leased to them.](#)

In a media conference call this afternoon Wilson and Congressman Tim Ryan (OH-17) stated that this measure would force big oil to use that land or give up the federal onshore and offshore leases.

“Companies could nearly double U.S. oil production from public lands if they actually started drilling the land available to them and stopped stockpiling leases,” Wilson said. “The President and Big oil are on a deliberate campaign to mislead the public. They yell about needing access to ANWR, but Big Oil is sitting on millions of acres that have been untapped. I say if they’re not going to drill on that land, the U.S. government should lease the land to some company that will.”

Oil companies are currently producing on about 20-percent of the offshore acres they hold. Onshore it’s less than 30-percent. The Energy Information Administration estimates that if big oil used the property that the government has made available to them, an additional 4.8 million barrels of oil could be produced each day. That’s nearly double current domestic oil production.

“These companies need to put their money where they mouth is and start drilling,” Wilson said.

HR 6251, the Responsible Federal Oil and Gas Lease Act would force oil and gas companies to either produce or give up federal onshore and offshore leases. Under this legislation, companies would also be banned from obtaining any more leases unless they can demonstrate that they are producing oil and gas or are diligently developing the leases they already hold. Similar and effective rules already apply to coal companies.

“People are really being hurt by these high gas prices,” Wilson said. “I know Congress needs to do more.”

To that end Congressman Wilson is also researching legislation that’s in the works that would crack down on market speculation. Wilson will hold a news conference in Bridgeport on Monday, June 23, 2008 at 9:45am to further discuss oil drilling and the need for more government oversight.

WHO: Congressman Charlie Wilson

WHAT: Press Conference to discuss some of the causes behind high gas prices: oil drilling and lack of government oversight

WHERE: Sunoco
101 Aetna Street
Bridgeport, OH

WHEN: Monday, June 23, 2008 at 9:45 a.m.